

Free Press wins award

The Acton Free Press has won an award for composition and layout, reproduction (page design) in a provincial newspaper competition.

The Free Press earned top spot for composition, layout and reproduction of its inside pages in the Ontario Community Newspaper Association (OCNA) 1983 General Excellence competition for

class three papers, circulation 3,001 to 4,500.

Class three generally draws the most entries from Ontario community newspapers and judging was based on mandatory issue submissions for the weeks January 19 and June 1, 1983.

Awards will be presented at the annual OCNA convention in March.

Acton man in Milton accident

A two car collision along an icy Ontario St. in Milton, Thursday morning, resulted in damage to both vehicles report regional police.

A car driven by Fritz Dehaan, 54, of Mowbray Place, Acton had an estimated \$1,000 damage. A car driven by John Barringer, 30, 201 Harvest Dr., Milton had \$500 damage.



Laura Gevaert, Bianca Bauer, Jennifer Webb and Wendy Graham show off the marionettes they made as part of their grade three class project at St. Joseph's school. The project, headed by teacher Sharon Bradley, was a lesson in following instructions and a follow-up after reading Pinocchio.



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Seek Town funding for Neighborhood Watch signs

Councillor Rick Bonnette will be going to Halton Hills budget committee seeking funds for Neighborhood Watch signs for Acton.

He and Halton Regional Police crime prevention officer Bob Ustrzycki have determined there's a need for signs at two entrances to the Lakeview area, two entrances to Bovis and one for the Crescent St. area.

Lakeview is "more or less" completely organized as a Neighborhood Watch area.

Bovis is partly organized, but there are some gaps. Ustrzycki explained it isn't much use to have some neighbors watching their neighbors and others not. A small group of residents in that area will be working the next few weeks to get the whole area broken down into blocks of 20 homes under block captains.

Progress has also been made in the Crescent St. area and it should all be divided up into blocks within a month.

Besides seeking the funding for the signs, which Bonnette said run \$30 to \$35, he'll also be asking Town permission to have the signs erected on posts.

Ustrzycki said stickers for front and back doors of homes have been given out to block captains in various areas.

Between the stickers on doors and Neighborhood Watch signs, there should be ample indication to would-be thieves that they aren't welcome in those areas.

Last year there were 53 house break-ins in Acton and area. However, Ustrzycki has uncovered some more alarming statistics. In Bovis last year there were 11 house burglaries. That means, he said, one in 30 homes was hit as there are about 300 homes in the area. So it is imperative that the subdivision gets completely organized under Neighborhood Watch.

There hasn't been much interest from Glenlea, Kingham or the downtown areas of old Acton yet, Ustrzycki said. Kingham and downtown aren't too bad for house break-

ins, but Glenlea has figures comparable to Bovis, so there is a great need for Neighborhood Watch there.

Ustrzycki said completion of organization of Bovis and Crescent St. areas is key to eventually getting all of Acton covered under the program, since it will "snowball" across the community.

Neighborhood Watch got off to a great start last spring and then organization efforts ceased for the summer as past experiences show people just aren't as interested in big community projects when the weather is nice.

Things have been slow resuming since the fall because Halton Community Resources and Services, which was helping co-ordinate Neighborhood Watch in Acton, lost federal funding. Now that organization, which sets up meetings, contacts block captains, etc., will likely have to quit its Neighborhood Watch efforts in Milton too, due to lack of funds.

At a meeting last Wednesday, seeing a small crowd, Ustrzycki noted when there's a fire people don't blame the firefighters, but when they're burglarized they blame the police.

Having a good "nosy neighbor" is better than having a burglar alarm.

Neighborhood Watch, once it's set up pretty much runs itself and it's the community, not the police, who keep it going.

However, people interested in helping to prevent themselves from being victims of crime need to give up two of their evenings. At these two meetings they learn how to secure their home, how thieves get into your home, how to report a crime or suspected crime and how to do suspect identification. Presentations run about 90 minutes for each of the two evenings.

"Then the people get organized and just watch each other. You catch the criminals and we (the police) are the tools you use to catch them," Ustrzycki explained.

He noted he's received a stack of cards from patrolling officers noting various examples of poorly secured property in Acton. Officers have spotted garage doors left open, some at Neighborhood Watch homes where the residents "should know better now."

"If you see your neighbor's garage door open, go close it. Park your car in his driveway when he's away to give it that lived-in look. Get together with your neighbors and have an Operation Identification evening (marking of valuables so they can be more easily returned after they're recovered)." He also explained there's real social benefits from Neighborhood Watch.

In the future, Neighborhood Watch meetings in Acton will only be for people who haven't joined yet. If you're interested in getting involved call the police and they'll take your name and number and pass it on to a co-ordinator or block captain in your area, or help you get going on working with neighbors in your area to get a Neighborhood Watch.

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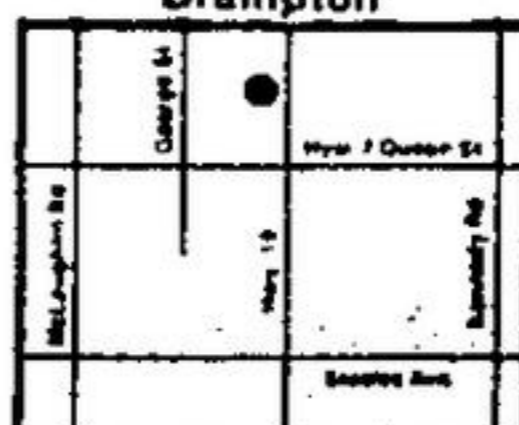


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